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AUTHOR McElreath, Nancy R., Ed.
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ABSTRACT

A systematic approach to planning and presenting the data collection activities of a State Department of Education is described. The Information Communication System, a model communication system used by the state of New Jersey, conveys narrative and statistical information relating to a school district's students, teachers, finances, facilities and service programs. Procedures which should be used to collect data within the communication system are detailed; and the roles of data collection participants at the state, county, and local level are outlined. (Author/HV)

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA FROM LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

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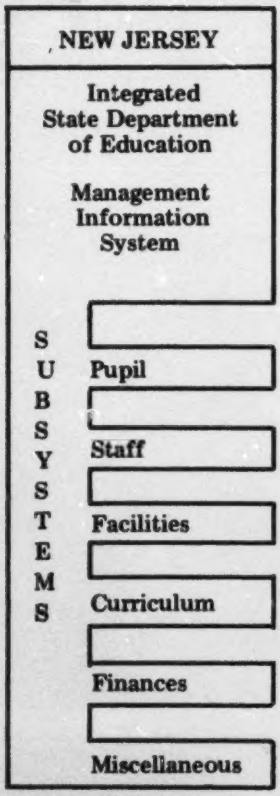

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OFFICE OF
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Fred G. Burke, *Commissioner*
New Jersey Department of Education

April, 1976
(Second Printing)

NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Fred G. Burke, *Commissioner*
Ralph H. Lataille, *Deputy Commissioner*

Gary Gappert
Assistant Commissioner
Research, Planning and Evaluation

Vincent Calabrese
Assistant Commissioner
Administration and Finance

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA FROM LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

NOTE:

This paper describes the functions and/or roles of data collection participants in the Department's Information Communication System. The standard operating procedures for collecting data from local education agencies are displayed in a LEA data collection model. It is only through such a system that Program Managers can begin to understand each others needs and communicate most effectively.

THIS PROCESS MUST BE UTILIZED WHEN COLLECTING DATA FROM LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS.

Ralph H. Lataille, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner

Edward M. Jackowski, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Management Information

Francis Pinkowski
MIS Project Director
Office of Management Information

April, 1976

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Dr. William Lucow	-	Division of School Programs
Dr. Po-Yen Koo	-	Division of Vocational Education

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Ms. Nancy R. McElreath

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STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DATA FROM LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES

A systematic approach to planning and presenting the data requirements of a State Department of Education's divisions, programs or projects is desirable because too often data collection is random and haphazard. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the user of educational information to the principles of Management Information Systems, and to provide the user with a generic educational data collection model.

In the classroom, Principal's Office, the Guidance Office, the Superintendent's Office, "and elsewhere, the communication of information is a daily activity."[1] Information is valuable and can be presented in the form of a speech, narrative, or statistical report; it may contain each of these elements or even be non-verbal. This paper is concerned with a communication system that conveys narrative and statistical information relating to a school district's students, teachers, finances, facilities, instructional and service programs, etc.

Designed to reduce the response burden of local districts, an "Information Communication System" is described in Section I. The procedures used to collect data within the communication system are detailed as a step-by-step operation in Section II, "Data Collection Procedures." Section III explicitly describes "The Functions and/or Roles of Data Collection Participants."

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[1]Robert C. Jeffrey and Owen Peterson, Speech (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 230.

SECTION I

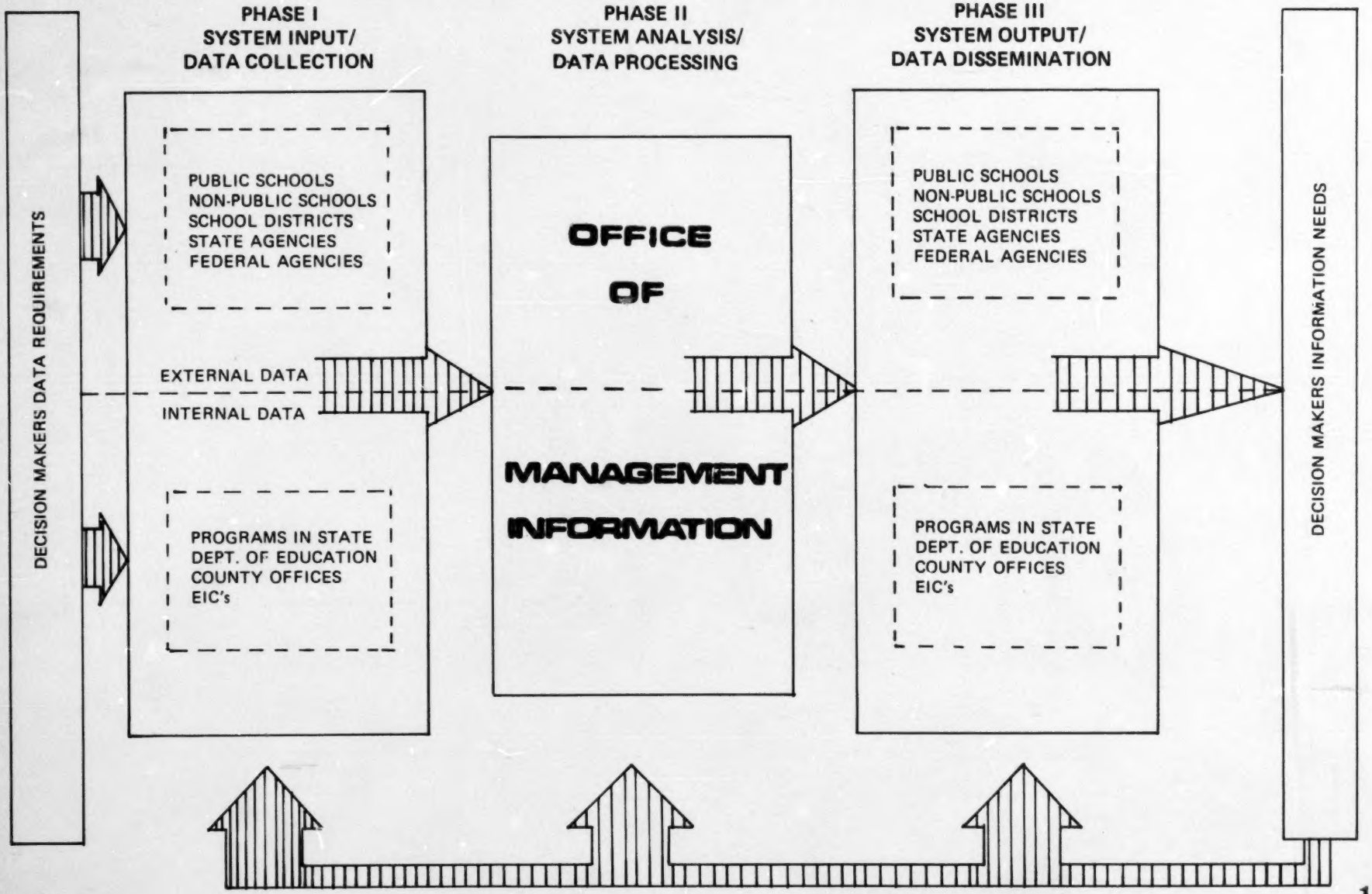
INFORMATION COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

The Office of Management Information (OMI) is the principal agency responsible for planning and coordinating the development and implementation of a Management Information System in the New Jersey State Department of Education. To carry out this assigned function, the Office of Management Information has three purposes to achieve and maintain. These purposes are:

> To deliver continuous information on past, present, and future educational/administrative performance which, once reviewed by decision makers, will enable them to take appropriate action;
>
> to minimize the flow of redundancies and unjustified data collected at both the State and the Local School System levels; and
>
> to assure the accuracy and timeliness of data disseminated throughout the Department of Education.

Based upon these purposes, a State Department of Education Management Information System (MIS) is defined as the integrated collection, processing, and dissemination of all internal (within the State Department of Education) and external (Local School District) data that flows throughout the educational system on an accurate and timely basis. Figure 1 is a paradigm describing the flow of data through the Department's information system. This flow diagram delineates the integrated relationships of the system's three major components: (1) collecting, (2) processing, and (3) disseminating information that resolves the data needs of decision makers.

Figure I
State Department of Education Integrated Management Information System



This figure depicts the flow of data through the Department of Education's Integrated Management Information System

A strong communication and logistical network has been developed by the Office of Management Information to coordinate the establishment and continuation of this Management Information System. This communication network (Information Communication System) will provide Program Managers with an understanding of why certain types of data are needed by particular divisions. It also enables individual data needs to be extracted from existing data in his/her Division or another Division. To facilitate the smooth operation of this communication network, each Division and County Office has assigned personnel to work with and assist the staff of the Office of Management Information. These staff members are called Data Analysts. They are the:

DIVISION DATA ANALYST, and

COUNTY DATA ANALYST.

Data Analysts, in conjunction with Office of Management Information personnel, constitute the Department's Management Information Team.

This document should serve as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be followed by Department of Education personnel involved in the collection of data from local school systems.

Management Information System Team

A Management Information System is a long-range operation that involves continuous development and expansion. Only through the combined efforts of the staffs of the Office of Management Information, the Divisions, the County Offices and the regional Educational Improvement Centers will data collection from local districts be successful. The Management Information System Team can best be described by the following relationship:

OMI + CDA + DDA = MIS TEAM, where

OMI = the Office of Management Information,

CDA = the County Data Analyst,

DDA = the Division Data Analyst, and

MIS TEAM = an integrated communicative effort to coordinate data needs and requirements of the entire Department of Education.

Briefly, the duties of the members of the Management Information System Team are twofold. In summary, these duties are:

> First, County data Analysts and Division Data Analysts (through program cost centers) are responsible for collecting and editing data promptly and then transmitting accurate data to the Office of Management Information or the appropriate program cost center. They are responsible for monitoring and clearing through the appropriate channels the collection of data by program cost centers, and for insuring that standard data collection procedures, as described below, are maintained.
>
> Second, County and Division Data Analysts and staff, of the Office of Management Information are responsible for facilitating the collection, consolidation, and synthesization of Local School System data collection instruments. All instruments will be reviewed by Data Analysts. Such a process should minimize redundancies and unjustifiable data collections within Programs, Divisions, and County Offices. The Data Analysts, under the direction of the Office of Management Information, periodically will repeat this process as a Department-wide review.

The result of the Management Information System Team approach is an information system that can provide for one-time only collection of data, easy retrieval of stored data, and ready access to existing data.[2]

---

[2]This purpose can only be achieved through the utilization of fourth generation computer technology. Anything less will necessitate duplication that is created by program levels needs. Examples of computer utilization include: John Dearden, "Systems Organization and Responsibility," and Neal J. Dean, "The Computer Comes to Age," in Managing Computer-Based Information Systems (Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1971), pp. 591-622.

Policies for Data Collection

Management Information System Team members must rely upon the policies established by the Commissioner of Education when collecting data from Local School Systems and their communities. Therefore, when using this document the reader should continually review as a point of reference the following policy statements:

POLICY STATEMENT #1	No instruments shall be authorized and used to collect data from Local School Systems unless they follow the Standard Operating Procedures of the New Jersey State Department of Education for collecting data from local school systems and are routed through the Office of Management Information.
POLICY STATEMENT #2	No Program Cost Center within the New Jersey State Department of Education will collect data directly from local School Systems unless they coordinate their needs with the Office of Management Information.
POLICY STATEMENT #3	No federal agency or its contractors shall collect data directly from Local School Systems. All such requests for data must be routed through the Office of Management Information and then assigned to an appropriate program cost center.
POLICY STATEMENT #4	No local School System will be required to complete a data collection instrument that has not been reviewed and approved.

SECTION II

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data collection is an orderly procedure for acquiring information from a particular population. This section introduces the reader to three data collection publications. It then describes a step-by-step procedure for gathering needed information related to Local Education Systems (LEA Data Collection Model).

Data Collection Publications

Before reviewing the procedures to collect data from Local Education Agencies, it is essential to have a knowledge of three publications normally associated with large scale educational data collections. These publications--a *Data Element Dictionary*, an *Annual Data Collection Plan*, and an *Annual Publication Abstract Plan*--inform Local Education Systems, County Offices, various educational associations, and others of: (1) what the Department plans to collect, (2) who within the Department is responsible for collecting data, (3) when the Department intends to collect the data, and (4) how the Department plans to use the data.

Data Element Dictionary. A Data Element Dictionary is based upon the principles of the United States Office of Education (USOE) handbook series that classifies and standardizes educational terminologies.[3] It provides a commonly-accepted vocabulary which is necessary for an integration of data bases across organizational lines.

[3]See USOE standard terminology handbook series on facilitating and improving the collection, maintenance, and reporting of educational information.

The Data Element Dictionary defines the characteristics of data elements used and available in the New Jersey Department of Education. The Dictionary is used to build a common data base and provide "detailed descriptions of each item of relevant data to permit retrieval..."[4] by Program Managers. When a data collection has been approved, the Data Element Dictionary will be updated to include new elements or modified to reflect changes in data element definitions.

Annual Data Collection Plan. The Annual Data Collection Plan is a publication of the approved instruments planned for implementation during a given school year.[5] It lists by month the justification for and the types of instruments that will collect data. Through the Annual Data Collection Plan, Local School Systems, County Offices, and Program Managers will be notified in advance about forecasted collections. The plan shall be updated during the year by addendum notices (insert sheets) distributed by the Office of Management Information.

Annual Publication Abstract Plan. The Annual Publication Abstract Plan is a publication that describes in abstract form the results of planned data collection of the forthcoming year. For example, if an instrument collects student enrollments by grade and school, what products or publications will result from this data collection and when will its documentation become

---

[4]Through the use of a data dictionary, all facets of an organization's data can be effectively used. See John J. Cahill, "A Dictionary/Directory Method for Building a Common MIS Data Base," The Technology of Data Base Management Systems (Arlington, Virginia: College Reading, Inc., 1974), p.

[5]Several State Departments of Education are employing the use of Annual Data Collection Plans. For example, see the Annual Data Collection Plans of Colorado, Florida, and Texas.

available? Some data collections might not require a publication; in this case, the data collection itself might be the product. For purposes of the Annual Publication Abstract Plan, a publication may be defined as any planned printed or xeroxed memorandum, article, outline, handbook, guide, standard operating procedure, report, or study that is compiled, edited, and published by a program cost center.

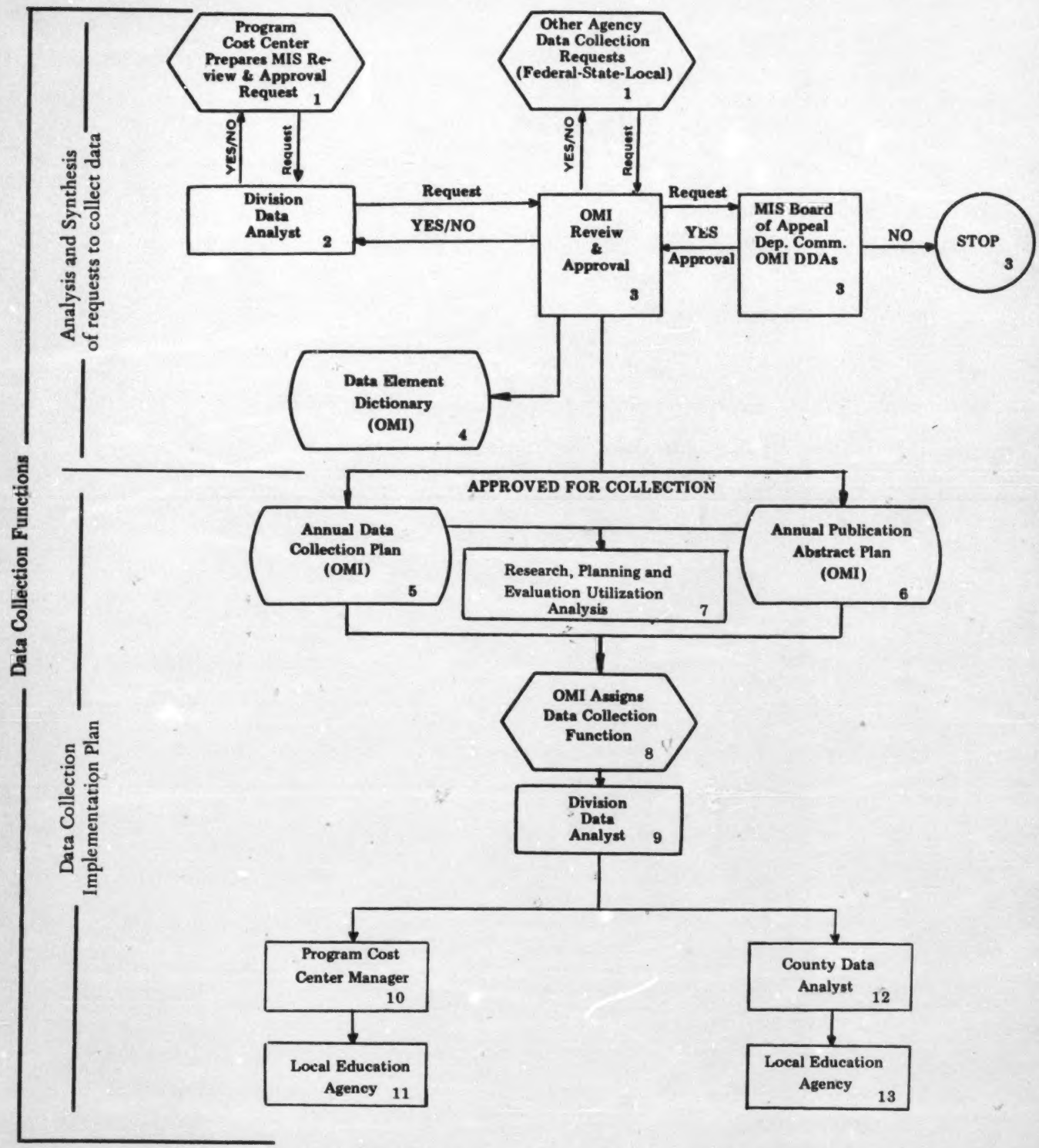
Local Education Agency Data Collection Model

A plethora of instruments that have never been reviewed through a common data base are described in Management Information System vernacular as being fragmented or non-integrated. To cope with this phenomenon, integrated systems require structured or orderly data collection procedures which will identify who or what program within an organization collect data. After this identification is known, certain steps can be taken to review all instruments (old and new) for non-fragmentation. Once an instrument is reviewed and approved, it can then be placed in an Annual Data Collection Plan. This item analysis of all data elements on a given instrument allows one to see if a data element is being collected elsewhere. The Data Element Dictionary should aid this process because it identifies who is collecting individual data elements. If data elements are being collected elsewhere, the instruments effected must be synthesized before incorporation into the Annual Data Collection Plan.

Data Collection Model. The New Jersey Department of Education's procedures for collecting data from Local School Systems are displayed in a series of steps as shown in Figure 2, *LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCY DATA COLLECTION MODEL.*

Figure 2

LEA Data Collection Model



This figure describes the flow of activities required to collect data from local school systems

As indicated, there are two primary data collection functions: (1) the analysis and synthesis of requests to collect data, and (2) an implementation plan for collecting the data from Local Education Agencies.

The analysis and synthesis function pertains not only to new instruments but also instruments that have existed over the years. This function requires, as an initial step, the review by Division Data Analysts of all the instruments in their Division's programs; that is, an analysis of each instrument and then a snythesis of all the instruments within the Division. Any data elements that are identical should be recognized and stopped from being collected by more than one program. After Division instruments have been synthesized, the steps of analysis and synthesis can occur on a Departmental basis.

The second function, implementing a plan to collect data, involves assigning this function indirectly to a program or a County Data Analyst (see Policy Statement #2).

Operational Functions of the Management Information System Team. Steps 1 through 12 of the LEA Data Collection Model can be seen as the functions of the Management Information System Team and data requestors. These steps, as shown in Figure 2, are:

STEP 1.

Requests to collect data enter the system. There are two possible entry points: requests from Program Managers, and requests from other agencies (Federal, State, Local, etc.).

First, if a Program Manager wants to collect data, he or she must complete an MIS Review and Approval Request. The first part is the *MIS REVIEW AND APPROVAL DOCUMENT*, and the second part is the *PUBLICATION ABSTRACT DOCUMENT*. The MIS Review and Approval document provides

information concerning the justification and key duties for the collection of data (Exhibit 1). An abstract of the report to be produced must be given on the Publication Abstract document (Exhibit 2). Copies of the actual *INSTRUMENTS* to be used in the data collection are attached to the above-mentioned documents. (Appendix A provides a glossary of terms used in this paper.) Program cost center requests to collect data are satisfied when both documents, including copies of the data collection instruments, are completed and forwarded to the next step. These documents, if approved, will be the inputs for the three publications discussed earlier (the Data Element Dictionary, the Annual Data Collection Plan, and the Annual Publication Abstract Plan).

Criteria for review and approval (Exhibit 3) fall within two major categories: (1) Justification, and (2) Technical Analysis. "In special circumstances, instruments not based directly on law or regulation may be authorized...on an emergency basis when such data are critical to program operation and delay would seriously jeopardize program activities."[6] The Division Data Analyst will use this criteria check sheet in his evaluation of the documents submitted. A document should not be forwarded to the next step unless all criteria are accomplished.

Requests from other agencies (Federal, State, Local, etc.) are submitted in the same manner as Program requests. However, in the case of Federal requests, the Chief State School Officer's Committee on Evaluation and Information Systems (CEIS) reviews, through an item analysis, Federal Program justifications for collecting each data element. Because of the close liaison with CEIS, the Office of Management Information must be informed and notified of all requests for data from the Federal Government, as stipulated in Policy Statement #3.

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[6]Review and Authorization Procedure For Data Collection Instruments of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

NJDE 811-31 (Rev. 3/78)

EXHIBIT 1

MIS REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUEST

Date Submitted ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.) Date Reviewed ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)

FOR OMI USE
- ☐ APPROVED FOR COLLECTION BY _____ MIS APPROVAL NO. _____
- EXPIRATION DATE ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)
- ☐ DISAPPROVED

1. Title of Form: _____

2. Program Cos: Center Originating Form _____
   Person to contact _____ Phone Number _____

3. Purpose: *(Describe by whom and how these data will be used)*

4. Justification: *(In the space provided cite specific legislation and regulation supporting need for the data)*
   - ☐ State Law _____ ☐ Federal Law _____
   - ☐ State Regulation _____ ☐ Federal Regulation _____
   - ☐ Other *(Specify)* _____

5. The Data Collection Form:
   A. Type of Form
   - ☐ Application ☐ Report ☐ Special Study/Survey

   B. Status of Form
   - ☐ Recurring Form
   - ☐ Revision of a recurring form
   - ☐ New form replacing a recurring form
   - ☐ New form which will be recurring
   - ☐ Special for a single collection

   C. Frequency of Return
   - ☐ Monthly
   - ☐ Quarterly
   - ☐ Annually
   - ☐ As necessary determined by respondent
   - ☐ Other *(Specify)* _____

6. The Critical Dates:
   - Date distributed to local districts ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)
   - Effective dates of data elements recorded on Form ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)
   - Deadline for final returns to be submitted in order to complete reports ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)
   - Deadline for the submission of report from data ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)

N.J. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/OMI

7. The responding populations: *(In the space provided enter the number of units and individuals from which returns are to be made)*

   A. Level of Response

No.		No.	
___	Elementary School(s)	___	School District(s)
___	Secondary School(s)	___	Diocesan Office(s)
___	Non-Public School(s)	___	County(s)

   B. Individuals primarily responsible for completing form

No.		No.	
___	Superintendent(s)	___	Program Director(s)
___	Board Secretary(s)	___	Teacher(s)
___	Board of Education Member(s)	___	Specialist(s) *(Specify)* _____
___	Business Manager(s)	___	Student(s)
___	Principal(s)	___	Parent(s)
___	Other *(Specify)* _____		

   C. If this is a sample population, is it
   - ☐ Random ☐ Selected/Stratified ☐ Voluntary

8. Will the data be processed: ☐ Internally ☐ Externally
   are the data processed:
   - ☐ Manually ☐ By Computer ☐ Both

9. Estimate the number of hours - professional and secretarial - required to collect and process these data and enter in the space provided:

ACTIVITY	HOURS	
	Professional	Secretarial
Design and type draft of form		
Distribute to respondents		
Logging-in Returns		
Follow-up of late returns		
Editing for accuracy and validity		
Tabulating the data		
Writing and typing report		
Administration (Arranging for approval-printing-mailing-Analysis, etc.)		

Division Data Analyst _____

Date of submission for review ___/___/___ (Mo. Day Yr.)

Exhibit 2
PUBLICATION ABSTRACT

Issuing Cost Center	Division			Code	
	Program			Code	
	Project			Code	
Contact Person	Name			Telephone	
Title					
Publication Date	MONTH _____ YEAR 19 ____				
Format	Size (inches)	Number of Pages	Narrative	Yes	No
			Tables	Yes	No
			Illustrations	Yes	No
Major Data Elements Included					
Abstract of Contents					
Data Source	Department Data Collection Instrument(s) Used			Form Number	
Division Data Analyst				Date	

EXHIBIT 3

CRITERIA FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF INSTRUMENTS TO COLLECT DATA

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
I. Justification: Under categories A. Legal and B. Utilization, check only those criteria which apply. Answer Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory to the statement under C. Availability.		
A. Legal		
1. A law or regulation explicitly stipulates this data collection for a required report.	☐	☐
2. A law or regulation mandates an activity which requires a data collection.	☐	☐
3. Information is required for legislative reports.	☐	☐
B. Utilization		
1. Information is required by decision-makers to assess the quality of the program.	☐	☐
2. Information is required for efficient program functioning and will be utilized for specifically defined activities.	☐	☐
C. Availability		
1. Data are not readily attainable from sources other than local school systems.	☐	☐
II. Technical Analysis: Respond with Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory.		
A. Data collected do not exceed that which are authorized by law, regulation or the operational plan.	☐	☐
B. Data elements and reporting terms are clearly defined and follow Department standards and definitions.	☐	☐
C. Format, content and other special techniques employed are in compliance with instrument evaluation standards.	☐	☐
1. Instrument Format Standards		
(a) Instrument is adequately spaced on the page.	☐	☐
(b) Excessive length is avoided and pages are numbered.	☐	☐
(c) Type used assures good readability and appearance, i.e., contrasting type is used for special instructions.	☐	☐
(d) Title is readily visible and descriptive of content.	☐	☐
(e) Cost Center is identified prominently on instrument.	☐	☐
(f) Clearance control number and expiration date appear prominently on first page.	☐	☐
(g) Return address and date appear on first page.	☐	☐
(h) Instructions are brief and clearly stated.	☐	☐
(1) Brief instructions appear at top of first page.	☐	☐
(2) Special instructions appear before appropriate items.	☐	☐
(3) Comprehensive instructions are published separately.	☐	☐

	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
(i) Margins are adequate for binding.	☐	☐
(j) A box design format is used for questions and tables	☐	☐
(k) Vertical alignment is followed to minimize tab stops on typewriter.	☐	☐
(l) Vertical and horizontal spacing conforms to written or typed entry specifications.	☐	☐
(m) Data entry sequence insures left to right, top to bottom order of completion.	☐	☐
(n) Format is suited to automated data processing.	☐	☐
2. Instrument Content Standards		
(a) Standard terms and acronyms are defined.	☐	☐
(b) Data elements are operationally defined.	☐	☐
(c) Data entries are arranged in logical sequence.	☐	☐
(d) Questions, statements, and headings are clearly stated avoiding problems or interpretation and bias.	☐	☐
(e) Response alternatives are mutually exclusive and unambiguous.	☐	☐
(f) Response alternatives are appropriate for the type of analysis to be conducted.	☐	☐
(g) Response alternatives are consistent throughout the form to minimize respondent error.	☐	☐
(h) Data tables facilitate accurate cross tabulation.	☐	☐
(i) Required calculations are clearly specified and explained.	☐	☐
3. Data collection and Analysis Principles		
(a) The instrument is the result of a carefully formulated study design.	☐	☐
(b) Samples are representative of the population from which drawn.	☐	☐
(c) Sample size permits adequate representation for analysis of important subgroups.	☐	☐
(d) Statistical analysis is appropriate for the type of data collected.	☐	☐

EXPLANATIONS:

STEP 2.

After a Program Manager completes the two MIS Review and Approval documents, he or she then submits the request to his/her Division's Data Analyst. The Division Data Analyst reviews the documents according to established criteria and forwards the documents, copies of the instruments, and the criteria check sheet to the Office of Management Information for review and approval. OR, the Data Analyst returns the documents to the Program Manager. In that case, the Program Manager will be asked for further clarification and/or insertion of needed data. The Division Data Analyst will at that time provide the Program Manager with the criteria check sheet on which the Analyst has noted satisfactory and unsatisfactory criteria and a written explanation.

STEP 3.

The Office of Management Information will make the final review and approval of the instruments to be used in the collection of data from Local School Systems. Based upon that evaluation, an instrument will be either disapproved, conditionally approved, or approved.

DISAPPROVED. If the documents and instruments submitted by the Program Manager are disapproved by the Office of Management Information, the Program Manager either may accept the decision or may request an appeal meeting with the MIS Board of Appeals, see Exhibit 4--the MIS Appeal Petition. That appeal will be channeled through the Division Data Analyst to the Office of Management Information, which will arrange for an appeal board meeting.

EXHIBIT 4

PROGRAM APPEAL PETITION

TO: Office of Management Information

FROM: _____
(Program Cost Center)

RE: Request to Meet with the MIS Board of Appeal

It is requested that the MIS Board of Appeal be convened to review the decision of the Office of Management Information on (Date) in response to this Program Cost Center's request to collect data.

Instrument Title_____

Date Submitted_____ Signed_____

- -

TO: MIS Board of Appeal Members

FROM: Office of Management Information

RE: Meeting with MIS Board of Appeal

A program appeal petition has been submitted by (Program Cost Center) because the Office of Management Information has disapproved (or conditionally approved) the following instrument: (Instrument Title). The MIS Board of Appeal will convene a (Time) on (Date) in the (Location).

Date_____ Signature _____

The MIS Board of Appeals is composed of the Deputy Commissioner (chair), a representative from the Office of Management Information, and all Division Data Analysts. A decision by the Appeal Board should be reached within 10 days of the petition for appeal.

If an instrument is disapproved by the MIS Board of Appeals, the instrument is at a STOP and cannot be used for data collection. If, however, an instrument is approved by the MIS Board of Appeals, it continues through the process as though the Office of Management Information had originally approved the instrument for data collection.

CONDITIONALLY APPROVED. If an instrument submitted for a Program Manager is conditionally approved, the revisions or modifications suggested can either be accepted by the Program Manager or he/she can appeal the decision to the MIS Board of Appeals. In either situation, the instrument may be approved after an agreement is reached.

APPROVED. If an instrument submitted by the Program Manager is approved, five activities must occur. First, an MIS number and date of expiration will be assigned and the Data Element Dictionary will be updated by the Office of Management Information (STEP 4). Second, the Division Data Analyst will be notified of the approval and he/she in turn will notify the Program Manager. Third, both the Annual Data Collection Plan (STEP 5) and the Annual Publication Abstract Plan (STEP 6) must be updated. Fourth, the Office of Management Information will assign the data collection function indirectly to either the Program Manager or the County Data Analysts (see Policy Statement #2). Fifth, the Office of Management Information will provide a standard letter of authorization that must be attached to the actual data collection instrument, see Exhibit 5. This last activity coupled with the Annual Data

EXHIBIT 5

MIS STATEMENT OF AUTHORIZATION

TO: Local Education System

FROM: Office of Management Information

RE: Collection of Data from Local Education Systems

The _____ Title of Instrument _____ has been reviewed and approved by the Office of Management Information for the collection of data in the 1976-77 school year.

The instrument is included in the Annual Data Collection Plan of the Department of Education. It is assigned the MIS number _____ and expires after the effective date of _____.

Signature _____
Office of Management Information

Collection Plan will insure the adherence of Policy Statement #4 and provide local school system personnel with an authorization check.

THE SAME PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL BY THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT INFORMATION APPLY TO INSTRUMENTS SEEKING APPROVAL BY OTHER AGENCIES (FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, ETC.). The only difference is that an MIS Review and Approval document will be completed by the Office of Management Information or the Program Manager assigned the responsibility to work with the agency requesting the data.

STEP 4.

Once an instrument is approved, the Data Element Dictionary must be updated by the Office of Management Information to include new data elements and an identification of the new user of existent data elements. There will be an annual review of the dictionary to determine if data elements should be deleted or modified to show changes in the state of the art. The Data Element Dictionary shall be distributed to all Program Managers, Division Data Analysts, and County Data Analysts. This will allow all users to readily select data elements that have been defined and also will provide an identification of where a specific data element can be located in the Department.

The steps just described represent the function of analyzing and synthesizing requests to collect data. The other function to be covered within this section on Data Collection Procedures involves Steps 5 through 12, the *IMPLEMENTATION OF A PLAN TO COLLECT DATA.*

STEP 5.

After an instrument has been approved, the local school system(s) in question should have advance knowledge of when they can expect to receive the instrument in question. That advance notice is one of the primary reasons for continually updating the Annual Data Collection Plan.

Prior to March 1 of each calendar year, all Program Managers are required to provide their Division Data Analyst with four copies of their programs' data collection requirements for the forthcoming year (beginning July 1 and ending June 30). Once received, Steps 1 through 4 will be reviewed again to insure consistency of data collection. The Program Manager shall be informed then of the results of the review by the Division Data Analysts, and the Program Manager then may exercise the options described under Step 3.

Data collections (special reports) not included in the Annual Plan must be submitted to the Division Data Analyst at least 45 days prior to the planned date for distribution. The Office of Management Information will complete the review and approval within 10 working days from the date of request.

The Annual Data Collection Plan should be distributed to all publics prior to July 1 of each year. As stated earlier, updates to the Plan will occur throughout the year (updates will be kept to a minimum).

The preparation of the Data Collection Plan is the first stage for implementing data collection. In order to be included in the initial Plan, an instrument must be approved by May 1 prior to the school year

in which it will be distributed. All approved state, federal, and other agency-scheduled data collections will be included in the plan. Local School Districts will not be required to respond to any requests for data not in the plan unless a special authorization and MIS Statement of Authorization is provided.

STEP 6.

The Annual Publication Abstract Plan was discussed previously. Its dates for completion and distribution are identical to that of the Annual Data Collection Plan.

STEP 7.

Under the direction of the Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation Program of Plans and Priorities, a panel composed of personnel from the Programs of Educational Assessment, Educational Research and Organizational Analysis will prioritize the utilization of each instrument within the context of the Annual Data Collection Plan.

The utilization analysis will be provided to the Office of Management Information within 10 days of receipt of all instruments which are to be included in the Annual Data Collection Plan.

The Research, Planning and Evaluation Program Panel will evaluate the utilization of the collected data as reported in the Annual Publication Abstract Plan. Program Cost Center Managers will be contacted by the Panel to determine if data are being utilized as to the dates and the form indicated in their respective publication abstract plan.

STEP 8.

The Office of Management Information will review all proposed data collections and through a feasibility analysis assign the data gathering activity to either the County Data Analyst, the Program Manager, or both.

If work loads permit, the County Data Analysts will be assigned to collect data for certain programs. Program Cost Centers themselves may be assigned to collect the data with or without the assistance of the County Data Analyst.

STEPS 9-13.

The Division Data Analyst (STEP 9) will assist in determining (1) the most expedient and efficient manner to conduct the data collection, and (2) whether the Program Cost Center Manager (STEP 10) or the County Data Analyst (STEP 12) should collect the data. If the Program Manager is not assigned the responsibility for data collection, he or she will aid the County Data Analyst in performing the data collection function. The final step (STEP 11 or 13) in these procedures is to collect the data from the Local School Systems and then begin to process the data either manually or through a computer.

The above data collection procedures are the component parts of the LEA Data Collection Model, as exhibited in Figure 2. All programs in the New Jersey Department of Education and other agencies (Federal, State, Local, etc.) must adhere to these procedures. If they are not followed, the response burden of the public schools in New Jersey will remain inordinately high.

SECTION III

THE FUNCTIONS AND/OR ROLES OF DATA COLLECTION PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the data collection process, from the initiation of a request to collect data, to the actual collection of the required data, are: (1) the Program Manager, (2) the Division Data Analyst, (3) the Office of Management Information, (4) the MIS Board of Appeals, (5) the Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation, (6) the County Data Analyst, and (7) the Local School System. This section describes the functions and/or roles of each participant in the collection of data from Local Education Agencies.

The Program Manager

The Program Manager will work with the Project Directors in his or her program cost center to determine their annual data requirements. If two or more program cost centers require the same data, one program cost center will be assigned the responsibility to collect the data. The Program Manager collecting the data must then provide the data on an accurate and timely basis. After the data requirements have been determined, it is then the Program Manager's[7] responsibility to submit an annual data collection request for his or her program by March 1 of each year. The proposed data collection

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[7]By having Program Managers submit their data collection requirements, it enables them to develop accurate plans, control the implementation of the plan, and direct the individuals involved in the plan. See Fred L. Friend, "Be a More Effective Program Manager," Journal of Systems Management, Vol. 27, No. 2 (February, 1976), pp. 6-9.

activity of the program will begin on July 1 for the upcoming school year. Other task associated with the Program Manager are:

1. Reviews with the Division Data Analyst the existing Departmental data bases to determine if identical data elements are being collected and are available;

2. completes a MIS Review and Approval document for each desired data collection activity;

3. completes a Publication Abstract document for each data collection that produces a publication (report);

4. submits copies of the above-mentioned documents and the actual instrument to their Division Data Analyst by March 1 of each year (special reports to collect data must be submitted 45 days before the planned collection);

5. provides, after an instrument is approved and assigned for data collection, appropriate training, materials, distribution, logging, and editing procedures for monitoring by the Division Data Analyst;

6. provides to their Division Data Analyst all changes and/or modifications to approved data collections; and

7. assures accurate data collection and timely report generation so that the data elements collected by one program cost center may be used as input for another program cost center.

8. informs the Office of Management Information "as soon as it is determined that an instrument will be discontinued."[8]

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[8]See Review and Authorization Procedure For Data Collection Instruments of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

The Division Data Analyst

The Division Data Analyst is responsible for coordinating the data requirements of program cost centers within his/her Division. To accomplish this, the Division Data Analyst informs Program Managers and their staff of the procedures to be followed when collecting data from Local School Systems. He then evaluates the design of their instruments by insisting that they adhere to the criteria check sheet (Exhibit 3). As the liaison between their Division and the Office of Management Information, the Division Data Analyst will forward all data collection instruments with the MIS Review and Approval document and the planned Publication Abstract document to the Office of Management Information, and then channel the disapproved, conditionally approved, or approved instrument back to the Program Manager. The roles of Division Data Analysts are to:

1. Review with Program Managers the existing Departmental data bases to determine if identical data elements are being collected and are available;

2. obtain and evaluate according to specified criteria all program requests to collect data;

3. forward all data gathering requests with the appropriate documents to the Office of Management Information;

4. inform the Program Manager of the results of the MIS Review and Approval procedure;

5. inform Program Managers of data elements needed by other program cost centers;

6. provide the Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation's Program of Plans and Priorities with a copy of all approved instruments in order that data elements can be related to the priority needs of the Department;

7. monitor the program cost center for proper logging and editing procedures, thus enabling other program cost centers to have accurate and timely data;

8. establish and maintain a file on the current status of instruments approved or pending approval;

9. provide (monthly) the Office of Management Information with actual Publication Abstracts;

10. advise and provide a technical analysis to the Division Head of all requested data collections (approved or disapproved) both before and after the MIS Review and Approval procedure;

11. provide training and other assistance on data collecting as needed at the program cost centers, county, regional, or local district levels; and

12. perform other data collecting assignments pertaining to the development and maintenance of an educational data system.

In addition to the above, the Division Data Analysts are members of the MIS Team and the MIS Board of Appeals.

The Office of Management Information

The Office of Management Information is responsible for coordinating the Department's Management Information System. The functions of the Office were described in Section I. Succinctly, these responsibilities as they related to data collection are to:

1. Insure that program cost centers, Division Data Analysts, and County Data Analysts follow the standard operating procedures for collecting data from Local School Systems;

2. approve, conditionally approve, and disapprove all data collections from local school systems (Department, State, Federal, Local, etc.);

3. provide the Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation with a draft copy of the Annual Data Collection Plan for utilization analysis;

4. provide to designated publics a Data Element Dictionary, an Annual Data Collection Plan, and an Annual Publication Abstract Plan;

5. make decisions as to whether a program cost center or County Data Analyst collects certain data from local school systems; and

6. provide directions for the MIS Team and the MIS Board of Appeals.

The MIS Board of Appeals

All data collections that are conditionally approved or disapproved may seek an appeal by filing a petition to the MIS Board of Appeals. The procedure for filing the petition were stated in the last section on "Data Collection Procedures." Again, the board consists of the Deputy Commissioner (chair), a representative of the Office of Management Information, and each Division Data Analyst. The role of the MIS Board of Appeals is:

1. To review a Program Manager's MIS Review and Approval documents and decide whether or not approval should be granted;

2. to direct the Office of Management Information where deemed appropriate and justifiable to approve an instrument and include it within the Annual Data Collection Plan; and

3. to require that all data collections follow the standard operating procedures outlined in this report.

The Division of Research, Planning and Evaluation

The Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation is responsible for analyzing the utilization of all Departmental instruments. Specifically, this program is responsible for:

1. Informing the Office of Management Information of the utilization analysis for each instrument within 10 days after receipt of the Annual Data Collection Plan; and

2. performing an evaluative utilization of each publication abstract document contained within the Annual Publication Abstract Plan.

The County Data Analyst

As a part of the MIS Team, the County Data Analyst is the Department's main liaison between the Department and local school systems. In performing this task, the County Data Analyst is responsible for:

1. Maintaining a liaison with public and private schools in regards to the collection of data;

2. maintaining close liaison on data collection with the Office of Management Information, Division Data Analysts, and Program Managers;

3. applying the "MIS Review and Approval" procedures to all data collecting instruments from the County Office and forwards the information to their Division Data Analyst;

4. informing the County Superintendent of all data collections originating from the County Office;

5. informing the County Superintendent of all data collection assignments originating from the Office of Management Information;

6. recommending alterations in data collections to the Office of Management Information on the basis of feasibility and special conditions;

7. visiting local districts and providing brief training sessions on instrument completions;

8. distributing instruments to local districts;

9. collecting completed instruments and insuring that appropriate logging procedures are followed;

10. editing all returned instruments for completeness and taking appropriate actions to obtain missing or incomplete data from districts and schools;

11. certifying along with the County Superintendent the accuracy and machine readiness of the collected instruments, see Exhibit 6; and

12. performing other data collecting tasks pertaining to the development and maintenance of an educational data system.

The Local School System

As responders to the data collection process, local school systems are important participants. And since these data collection procedures have been designed to make local school systems' response burden less frustrating, it is necessary to state their responsibilities. These are:

1. To insist and accept as valid data collections only those instruments (Department, State, Federal, Local, etc.) that are included in the Annual Data Collection Plan and that have affixed to them a standard letter of authorization from the Office of Management Information; and

2. to provide accurate data to whomever is gathering the data.

Exhibit 6

CERTIFICATION OF ACCURACY AND VALIDITY OF DATA

TO: Office of Management Information

FROM: Program Cost Center Managers
County Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Certification for Completeness and Accuracy of: Title of Instrument

This is to certify that all information contained on the above instrument has been verified and edited for the Program/County of _____ _____ by _____ (Program Cost Center Manager/County Data Analyst). These reports are accurate and ready for machine processing.

_____ Name

_____ Program Cost Center Manager
County Data Analyst

_____ Name

_____ Division Data Analyst
County Superintendent of Schools

cc: Dr. William Brooks
Dr. Ralph Lataille

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANALYSIS -- The task of examining a request to collect data by reviewing each component data element separately and then defining its relationship to other like or similar data elements.

ANNUAL DATA COLLECTION PLAN -- A publication of approved instruments to be used for data collection during a given year.

ANNUAL PUBLICATIONS ABSTRACT PLAN -- A publication that describes in abstract form the planned publications or product output of forecasted data collections.

APPLICATION -- An instrument used to collect data in response to an appeal, petition and/or requests for funding or approvals, as required by mandates of the Department of Education. Applications may involve data to be used in support of petitions for a license, requests for program funds, and approvals to implement a course of study.

COMMITTEE ON EVALUATION AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CEIS) -- Composed of 50 State Coordinators appointed by the Chief State School Officer in each of the fifty states and trust territories, CEIS represents a coordinated effort to evaluate data collection in public education. Their primary responsibility is to formulate recommendations in the area of federal-state-local educational information systems, including but not limited to research, evaluation and management information. All federal agencies requesting data from State Departments of Education and/or local education agencies are required to submit their proposed instruments to CEIS for review.

COST CENTER -- A unit of the organization to which objectives and costs are assigned. The Department is a cost center and its subsystems are also cost centers, i.e., at a different level of aggregation (division cost center, program cost center, or project cost center).

COUNTY DATA ANALYST (CDA) -- An individual assigned to act as the county's main data collection agent between the Department and the local school system.

DATA ANALYST (DA) -- An individual responsible for the coordination of specific data collection activities. Specific activities depend upon whether the Data Analyst is a county or division representative (see County Data Analyst or Division Data Analyst). A Data Analyst can be a manager, director, statistician, etc.

DATA COLLECTION -- An orderly procedure for acquiring information from a defined population.

DATA ELEMENT -- A combination of one or more data items that form a unit or piece of information. Examples of data elements are: (1) number of graduates by school, sex, and race; (2) number of students by school and grade; and (3) number of participating students by school and enrolled in Algebra I.

DATA ELEMENT DICTIONARY -- A published list of data elements and their definitions being used in data collection by the Department of Education.

DATA ITEM -- The smallest independent unit of data that can be referenced by a process, i.e., name, grade, school, sex, etc.

DIRECTLY -- This term is used to denote the requirement to attain an authorization to conduct a collection of data from local school districts.

DIVISION DATA ANALYST (DDA) -- An individual assigned to and responsible for coordinating a division's data requirements, that is, among and between a division's program cost centers.

FUNCTION -- One of several related outcomes contributing to a larger outcome. A function is usually a collection of required jobs or tasks necessary to achieve a specified objective or to bring about a given product or outcome.

INDIRECTLY -- Used to indicate that a Program Cost Center has been authorized to collect data and can initiate contacts with local school districts.

ITEM ANALYSIS -- The task of defining the smallest units of named data to be collected in the cells of a data collection instrument. Combinations of data items form data elements.

LEA DATA COLLECTION MODEL -- A step-by-step procedure used by State Departments of Education to gather needed data from Local Education Agencies.

MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM -- An organized assemblage of resources and procedures required to obtain, process, and disseminate data for the purpose of converting it into meaningful information that decision-makers can use to execute their management functions of planning, controlling and directing.

MIS NUMBER -- An alpha numeric code of six places which identifies an approved instrument by Division (first and second positions), Program Cost Center (third position), and the sequential number of the instrument within the Cost Center.

MIS REVIEW AND APPROVAL DOCUMENT -- A document which provides information concerning the justification, utilization and availability of the data in a proposed data collection. Part of the Annual Data Collection Plan, it must be prepared to accompany each instrument for which approval is sought.

MIS REVIEW AND APPROVAL REQUEST -- A proposal of defined specifications and documents that are required of a program cost center before they conduct a data collection. The request consists of three documents: (1) the program cost center's data collection instrument, (2) the MIS Review and Approval document, and (3) the Publication Abstract document.

MIS TEAM -- A group of individuals who coordinate the data needs and requirements of the entire Department of Education. They represent an integrated communicative effort to approve, monitor and assess the data collection procedures used in the Department.

PROGRAM COST CENTER -- A subsystem (cost center) of a particular division or a set of related project cost centers.

PROGRAM COST CENTER DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT -- An instrument or set of instruments proposed to collect data elements from a defined population.

PROGRAM MANAGER -- The individual responsible for the planning, control, and direction of a particular program's objectives and resources.

PROCESSING SET -- A data entry to be made on an instrument as the result of a mathematical computation performed by using two or more data entries recorded on that instrument.

PROJECT DIRECTOR - The individual responsible for the planning, control, and direction of a particular project's objectives and resources.

PUBLICATION ABSTRACT DOCUMENT -- A document which provides information concerning the utilization of the proposed data collection in terms of its intended outputs or products. This document becomes part of the Annual Publication Abstract Plan and the Annual Publication Abstract.

REPORT -- An instrument to be used in collecting data on a specified schedule for the purpose of determining the status or condition of an activity, project, program, school and/or school district. Examples are the requirements of federal programs.

SPECIAL STUDY/SURVEY -- An instrument to be used in collecting data of a unique in-depth nature relating to the status or condition of a specific activity, project, program, school and/or school district. Examples are needs assessments, a specific census study, and a specific evaluation study.

SYNTHESIS -- The task of consolidating data items and/or elements through the integration of data collection instruments.

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF EDUCATION HANDBOOKS -- A series of 10 publications of the United States Office of Education which classify and define educational terminology to establish a national standard for reporting educational data.